

# Chapter 10.B:

# File-System Implementation



# File-System Structure

## ■ *File structure*

- Logical storage unit
- Collection of related information

## ■ *File system* resides on secondary storage (e.g., disks)

- Provided user interface to storage, mapping logical to physical
- Provides efficient and convenient access to disk by allowing data to be stored, located, and retrieved easily

## ■ *Disk* provides in-place rewrite and random access

- I/O transfers performed in blocks of sectors (usually 512 bytes)

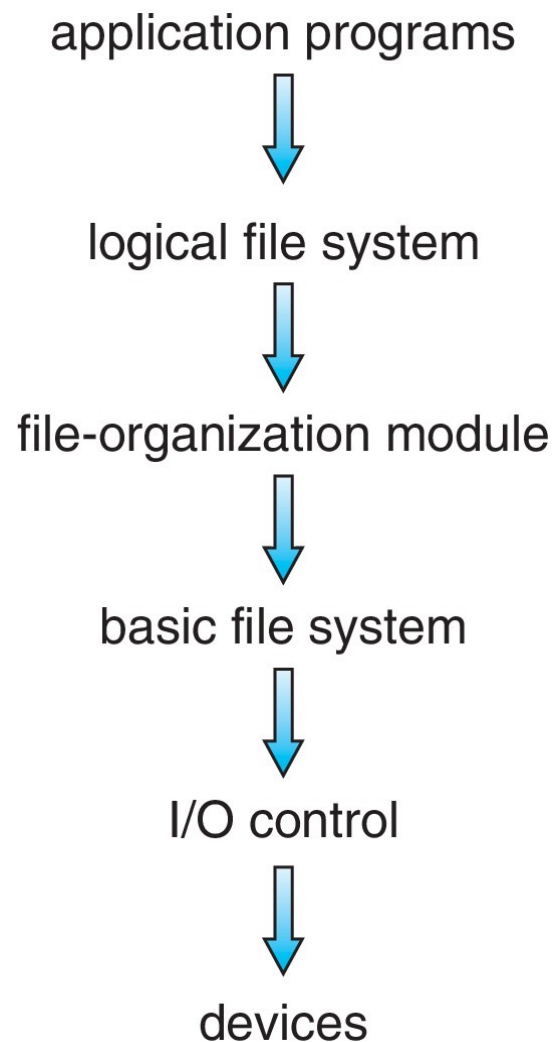
## ■ *File control block (FCB)* – storage structure consisting of information about a file

## ■ *Device driver* controls the physical device

## ■ File system is organized into *layers*



# Layered File System



- **Layering** useful for reducing complexity and redundancy, but adds overhead and can decrease performance

**Device drivers** manage I/O devices at the I/O control layer

E.g., Given commands like “read drive1, cylinder 72, track 2, sector 10, into memory location 1060” outputs low-level hardware specific commands to hardware controller

**Basic file system** given command like “retrieve block 123” translates to device driver

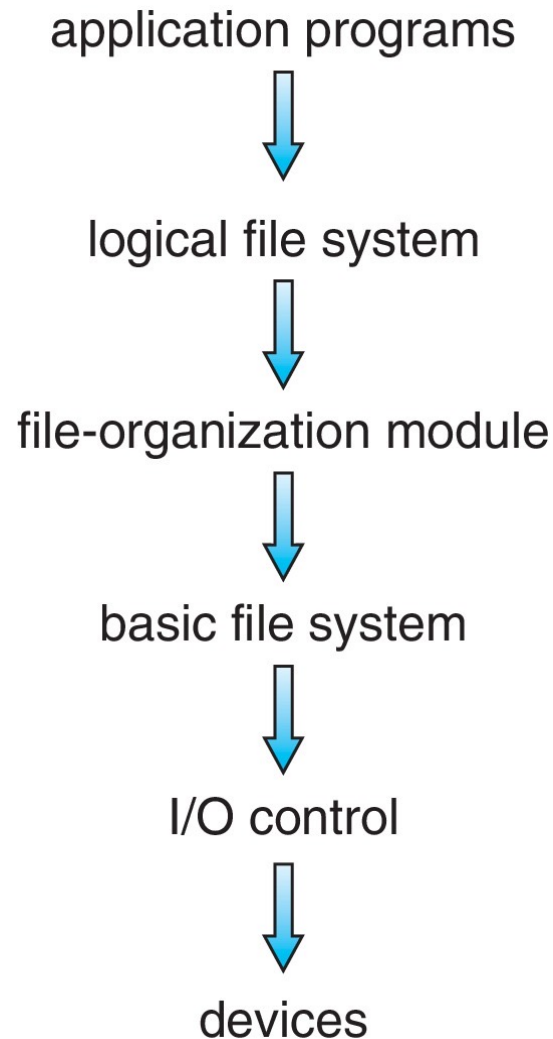
Also manages memory buffers and caches (allocation, freeing, replacement)

**Buffers** hold data in transit

**Caches** hold frequently used data



# Layered File System



File organization module understands files, logical address, and physical blocks

Translates logical block # to physical block #

Manages free space, disk allocation

Logical file system manages metadata information

Translates file name into file number, file handle, location by maintaining file control blocks (i.e., *inodes* in UNIX)

Directory management

Protection

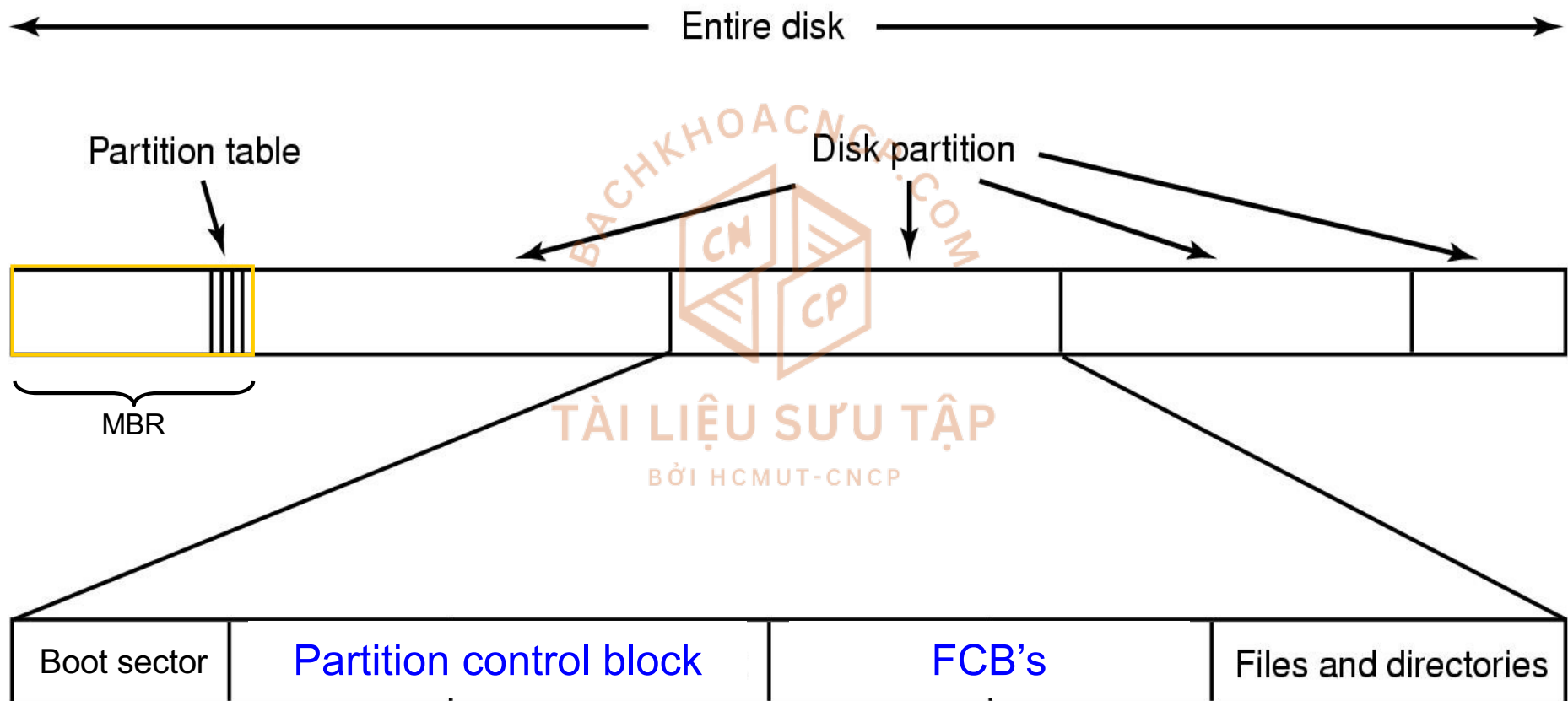
Logical layers can be implemented by any coding method according to OS designer



# File-System Implementation

- We have *system calls* at the API level, but how do we implement their functions?
  - *On-disk* and *in-memory* structures
- *Boot control block* contains info needed by system to boot OS from that volume
  - Needed if volume contains OS, usually first block of volume
- *Volume control block* (e.g., superblock, master file table) contains volume details
  - Total # of blocks, # of free blocks, block size, free block pointers or array
- *Directory structure* organizes the files
  - Names and inode numbers, master file table

# File-System Implementation (Cont.)



# File-System Implementation (Cont.)

- Per-file **File Control Block (FCB)** contains many details about the file
  - typically inode number, permissions, size, dates
  - NTFS stores into in *master file table* using relational DB structures

file permissions
file dates (create, access, write)
file owner, group, ACL
file size
file data blocks or pointers to file data blocks

# Directory Implementation

- *Linear list of file names* with pointer to the data blocks
  - Simple to program
  - Time-consuming to execute
    - ▶ Linear search time
    - ▶ Could keep ordered alphabetically via linked list or use B+ tree
- *Hash Table* – linear list with hash data structure
  - Decreases directory search time
  - Collisions – situations where two file names hash to the same location
  - Only good if entries are fixed size, or use chained-overflow method





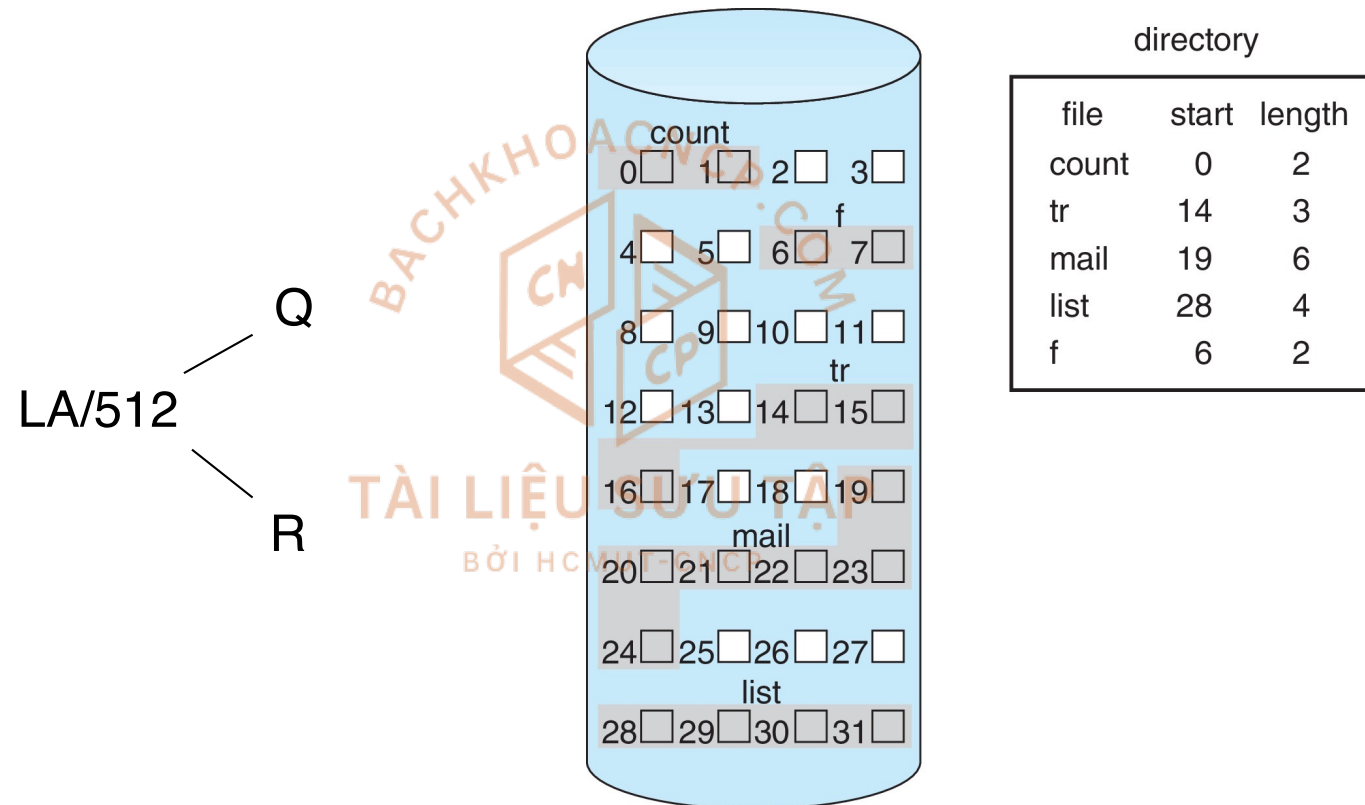
# Allocation Methods – Contiguous

- An allocation method refers to *how disk blocks are allocated for files*
- *Contiguous allocation* – each file occupies set of contiguous blocks
  - Best performance in most cases
  - Simple – only starting location (block #) and length (number of blocks) are required
  - Problems include finding space for file, knowing file size, external fragmentation, need for compaction off-line (downtime) or on-line



# Contiguous Allocation

## ■ Mapping from logical to physical



- Block to be accessed =  $Q + \text{starting address}$
- Displacement into block =  $R$

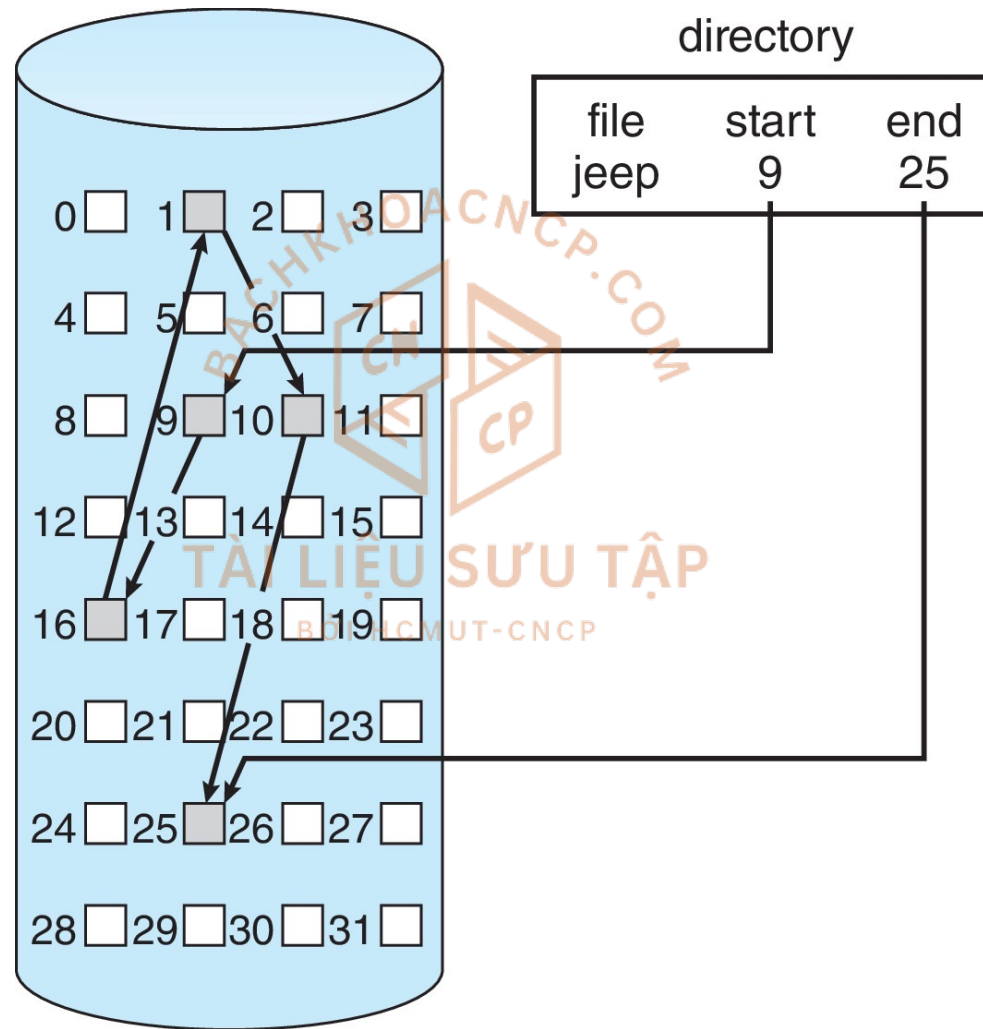
# Extent-Based Systems

- Many newer file systems (e.g., *Veritas File System*) use a modified contiguous allocation scheme
- *Extent-based file systems* allocate disk blocks in extents
- An extent is a contiguous block of disks
  - Extents are allocated for file allocation
  - A file consists of one or more extents

# Allocation Methods - Linked

- *Linked allocation* – each file is a linked list of blocks
  - File ends at nil pointer
  - No external fragmentation
  - Each block contains pointer to next block
  - No compaction, external fragmentation
  - Free space management system called when new block needed
  - Improve efficiency by clustering blocks into groups but increases internal fragmentation
  - Reliability can be a problem
  - Locating a block can take many I/Os and disk seeks
- *File Allocation Table (FAT)* variation
  - Beginning of volume has table, indexed by block number
  - Much like a linked list, but faster on disk and cacheable
  - New block allocation simple

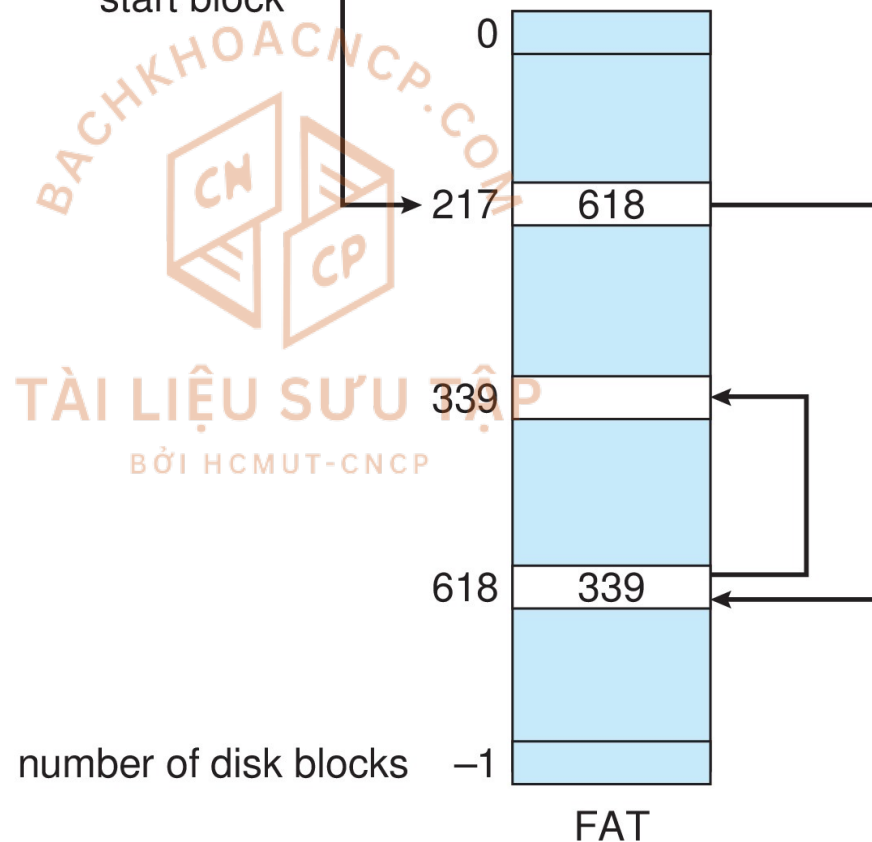
# Linked Allocation



# File-Allocation Table (FAT)

directory entry

test	...	217
name		start block

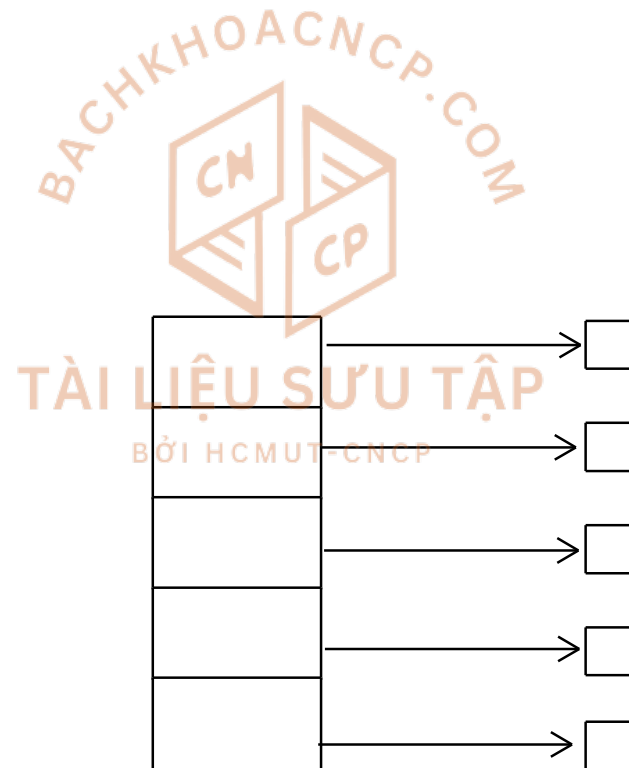


# Allocation Methods – Indexed

## ■ Indexed allocation

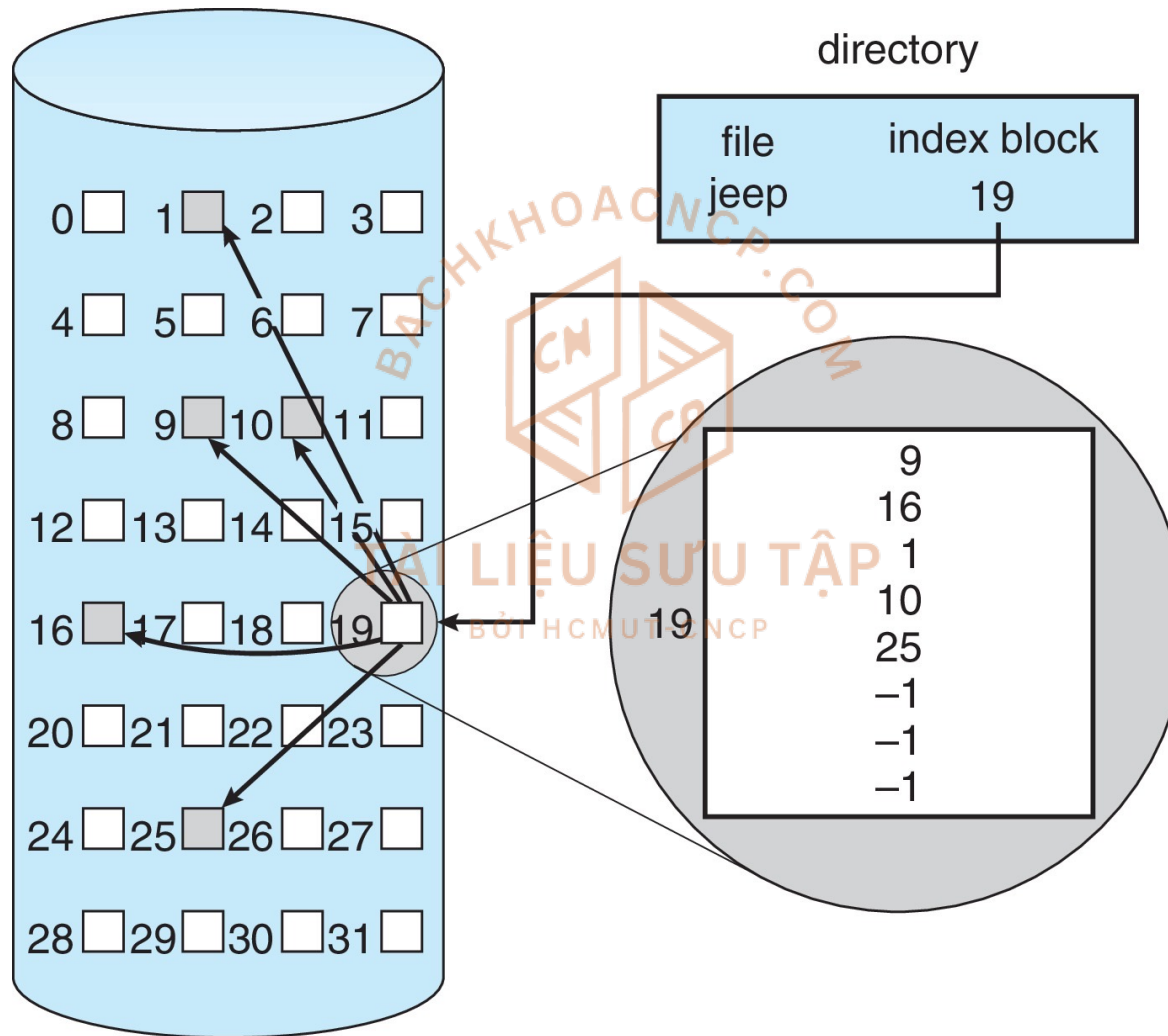
- Each file has its own index block(s) of pointers to its data blocks

## ■ Logical view



index table

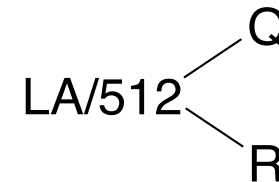
# Example of Indexed Allocation





# Indexed Allocation (Cont.)

- Need *index table*
- *Random access*
- *Dynamic access* without external fragmentation, but have overhead of index block
  - E.g., Mapping from logical to physical in a file of maximum size of 256K bytes and block size of 512 bytes. We need only 1 block for index table
  - Q = displacement into index table
  - R = displacement into block



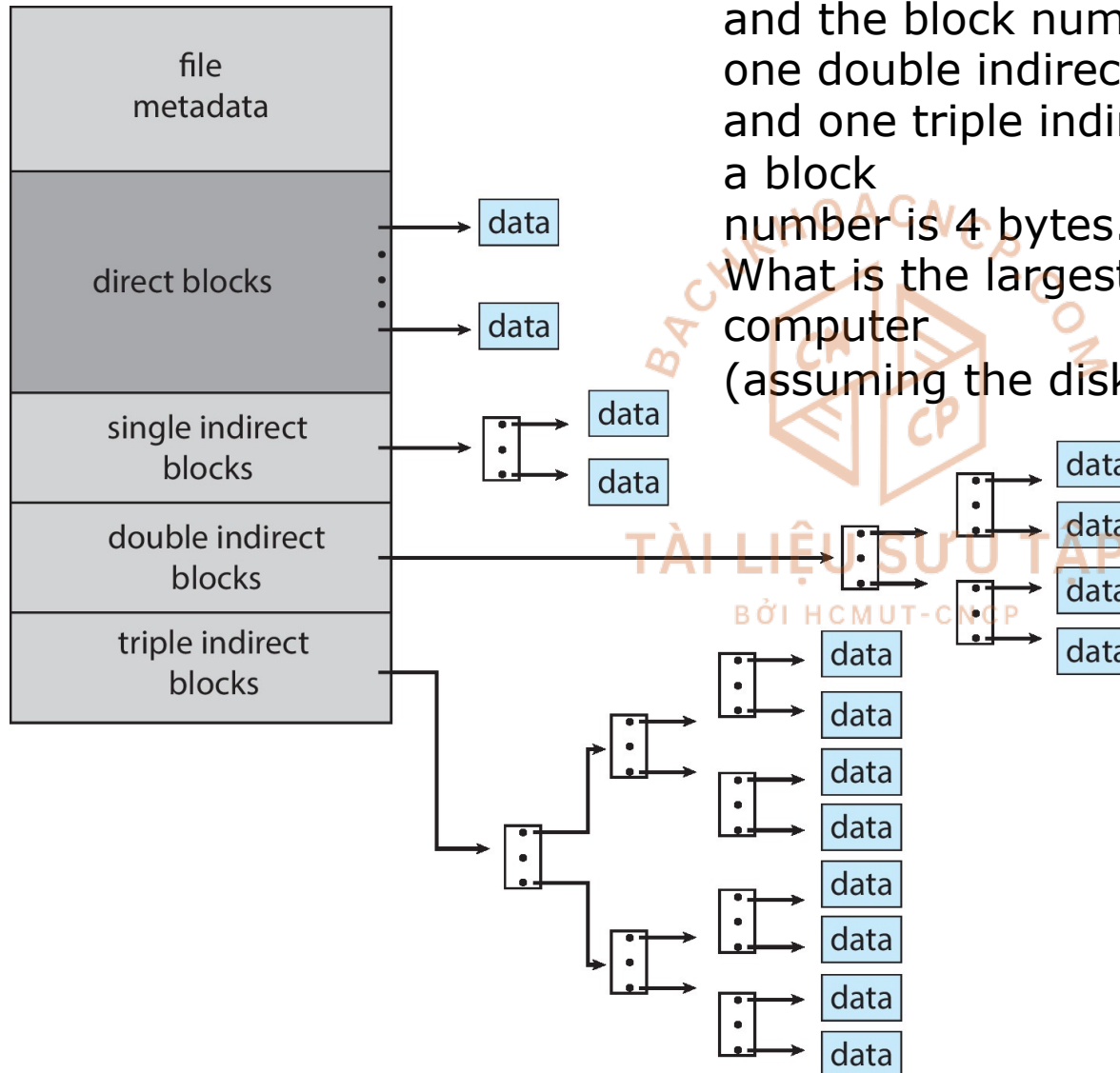


# Combined Scheme: UNIX UFS

Suppose that on a computer, the OS uses i-nodes and each disk block is 4KB.

Assume that an i-node contains 12 direct block numbers (disk addresses) and the block numbers for one indirect block, one double indirect block, and one triple indirect block. Assume also that a block number is 4 bytes.

What is the largest possible file on that computer (assuming the disk is large enough).

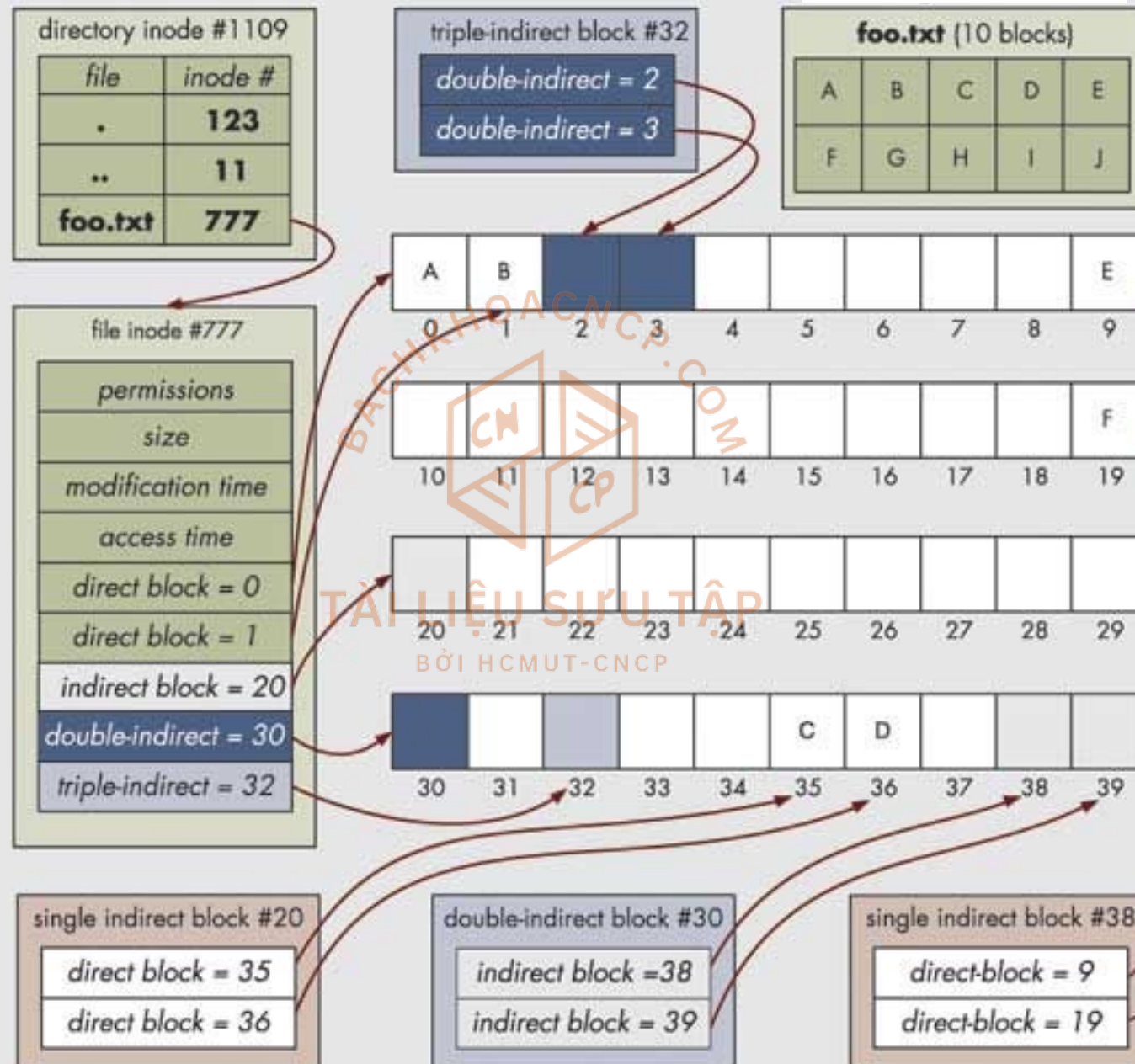


■ 4K bytes per block, 32-bit addresses

- More index blocks than can be addressed with 32-bit file pointer



## File (user view)



# Free-Space Management

- File system maintains free-space list to track available blocks/clusters
  - (Using term “block” for simplicity)
- Bit vector or bit map (n blocks)



$$\text{bit}[i] = \begin{cases} 1 \Rightarrow \text{block}[i] \text{ free} \\ 0 \Rightarrow \text{block}[i] \text{ occupied} \end{cases}$$

- Block number calculation
  - *(number of bits per word) \* (number of 0-value words) + offset of first 1 bit*
- CPUs have instructions to return offset within word of first “1” bit



# Free-Space Management (Cont.)

- Bit map requires extra space

- Example:

block size = 4KB = 212 bytes

disk size = 240 bytes (1 terabyte)

$n = 240/212 = 228$  bits (or 32MB)

if clusters of 4 blocks -> 8MB of memory

- Easy to get contiguous files

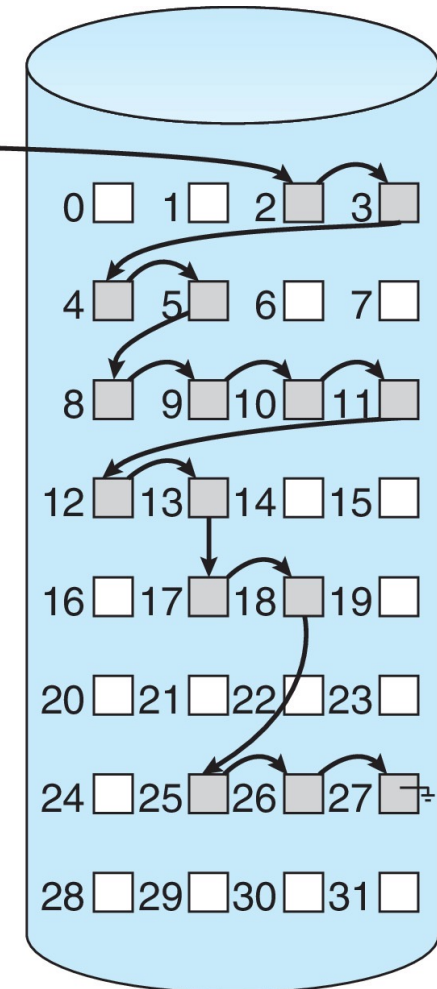


# Linked Free Space List on Disk

## ■ Linked list (free list)

- Cannot get contiguous space easily
- No waste of space
- No need to traverse the entire list (if # free blocks recorded)

free-space list head



# Free-Space Management (Cont.)

## ■ Grouping

- Modify linked list to store address of next **( $n-1$ )** free blocks in first free block, plus a pointer to next block that contains free-block-pointers (like this one)

## ■ Counting

- Because space is frequently contiguously used and freed, with contiguous-allocation allocation, extents, or clustering
  - ▶ Keep address of first free block and count of following free blocks
  - ▶ Free space list then has entries containing addresses and counts



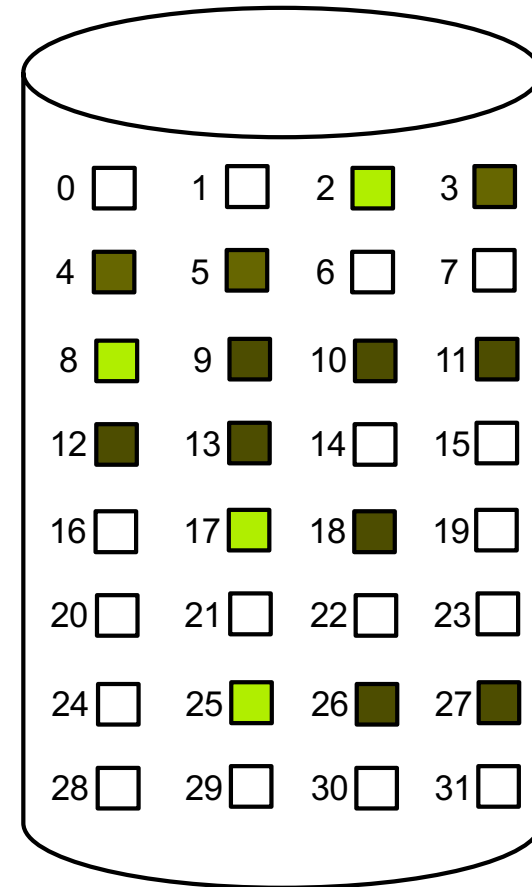
# Free-Space Management (Cont.)

## ■ Grouping

- Modify linked list to store address of next ( $n$ ) free blocks in first free block, plus a pointer to next block that contains free-block-pointers (like this one)

Grouping,  $n = 3$

Block 2 stores 3, 4, 5  
 Block 5 stores 8, 9, 10  
 Block 10 stores 11, 12, 13  
 Block 13 stores 17, 28, 25  
 Block 25 stores 26, 27





# Free-Space Management (Cont.)

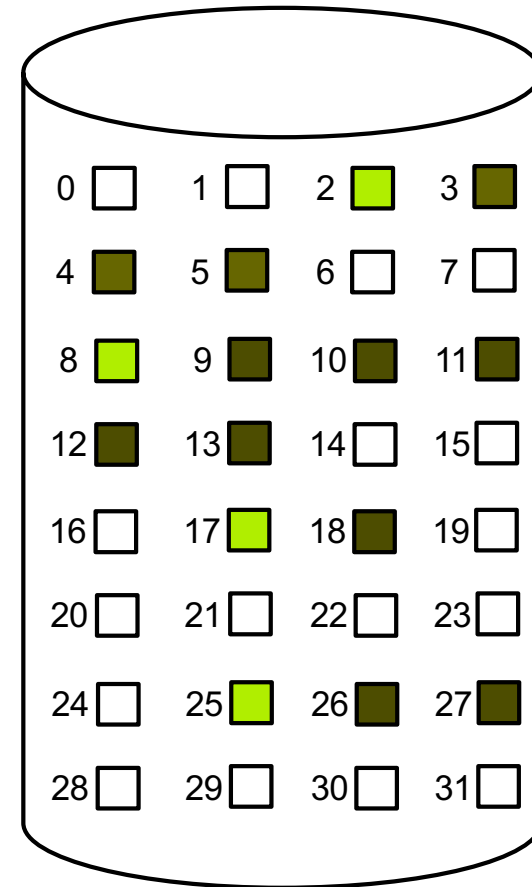
## ■ Counting

- Because space is frequently contiguously used and freed, with contiguous-allocation allocation, extents, or clustering

- ▶ Keep address of first free block and count of following free blocks
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■ start count

2	4
8	6
17	2
25	3



# Efficiency and Performance

## ■ *Efficiency* dependent on:

- Disk allocation and directory algorithms
- Types of data kept in file's directory entry
- Pre-allocation or as-needed allocation of metadata structures
- Fixed-size or varying-size data structures

## ■ *Performance*

- Keeping data and metadata close together
- Buffer cache – separate section of main memory for frequently used blocks
- Synchronous writes sometimes requested by apps or needed by OS
  - ▶ No buffering / caching – writes must hit disk before acknowledgement
  - ▶ Asynchronous writes more common, buffer-able, faster
- Free-behind and read-ahead – techniques to optimize sequential access
- Reads frequently slower than writes

- *Consistency checking* – compares data in directory structure with data blocks on disk, and tries to fix inconsistencies
  - Can be slow and sometimes fails
- Use system programs to *back up data* from disk to another storage device (magnetic tape, other magnetic disk, optical)
- Recover lost file or disk by *restoring data from backup*

# Log Structured File Systems

- *Log structured (or journaling) file systems* record each metadata update to the file system as a transaction
  - All transactions are written to a log
    - ▶ A transaction is considered committed once it is written to the log (sequentially)
    - ▶ Sometimes to a separate device or section of disk
    - ▶ However, the file system may not yet be updated
  - The transactions in the log are asynchronously written to the file system structures
  - When the file system structures are modified, the transaction is removed from the log
- If the file system crashes, all remaining transactions in the log must still be performed
- Faster recovery from crash, removes chance of inconsistency of metadata

# The Apple File System

In 2017, Apple, Inc., released a new file system to replace its 30-year-old HFS+ file system. HFS+ had been stretched to add many new features, but as usual, this process added complexity, along with lines of code, and made adding more features more difficult. Starting from scratch on a blank page allows a design to start with current technologies and methodologies and provide the exact set of features needed.

**Apple File System (APFS)** is a good example of such a design. Its goal is to run on all current Apple devices, from the Apple Watch through the iPhone to the Mac computers. Creating a file system that works in watchOS, I/Os, tvOS, and macOS is certainly a challenge. APFS is feature-rich, including 64-bit pointers, clones for files and directories, snapshots, space sharing, fast directory sizing, atomic safe-save primitives, copy-on-write design, encryption (single- and multi-key), and I/O coalescing. It understands NVM as well as HDD storage.

Most of these features we've discussed, but there are a few new concepts worth exploring. **Space sharing** is a ZFS-like feature in which storage is available as one or more large free spaces (**containers**) from which file systems can draw allocations (allowing APFS-formatted volumes to grow and shrink). **Fast directory sizing** provides quick used-space calculation and updating. **Atomic safe-save** is a primitive (available via API, not via file-system commands) that performs renames of files, bundles of files, and directories as single atomic operations. I/O coalescing is an optimization for NVM devices in which several small writes are gathered together into a large write to optimize write performance.

Apple chose not to implement RAID as part of the new APFS, instead depending on the existing Apple RAID volume mechanism for software RAID. APFS is also compatible with HFS+, allowing easy conversion for existing deployments.





# Summary

- Most file systems reside on *secondary storage*, which is designed to hold a large amount of data permanently. The most common secondary-storage medium is the *disk*, but the use of *NVM devices* is increasing.
- Storage devices are segmented into *partitions* to control media use and to allow *multiple, possibly varying, file systems on a single device*. These file systems are mounted onto a logical file system architecture to make them available for use.
- *File systems* are often implemented in a *layered or modular structure*. The lower levels deal with the physical properties of storage devices and communicating with them. Upper levels deal with symbolic file names and logical properties of files.

## Summary (Cont.)

- The various files within a file system can be allocated space on the storage device in three ways: through *contiguous*, *linked*, or *indexed allocation*. Contiguous allocation can suffer from external fragmentation. Direct access is very inefficient with linked allocation. Indexed allocation may require substantial overhead for its index block.

These algorithms can be optimized in many ways. Contiguous space can be enlarged through extents to increase flexibility and to decrease external fragmentation. Indexed allocation can be done in clusters of multiple blocks to increase throughput and to reduce the number of index entries needed. Indexing in large clusters is similar to contiguous allocation with extents.

## Summary (Cont.)

- *Free-space allocation methods* also influence the efficiency of disk-space use, the performance of the file system, and the reliability of secondary storage. The methods used include bit vectors and linked lists. Optimizations include grouping, counting, and the FAT, which places the linked list in one contiguous area.
- *Directory-management routines* must consider efficiency, performance, and reliability. A hash table is a commonly used method, as it is fast and efficient. Unfortunately, damage to the table or a system crash can result in inconsistency between the directory information and the disk's contents.
- A *consistency checker* can be used to repair damaged file-system structures. Operating-system backup tools allow data to be copied to magnetic tape or other storage devices, enabling the user to recover from data loss or even entire device loss due to hardware failure, operating system bug, or user error.





## Summary (Cont.)

- Due to the fundamental role that file systems play in system operation, their *performance* and *reliability* are crucial. Techniques such as log structures and caching help improve performance, while log structures and RAID improve reliability. The WAFL file system is an example of optimization of performance to match a specific I/O load.

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# End of Chapter 10.B.

